

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 23, 2004. Claims 1-16 were pending, with claims 2, 9 and 10 having been withdrawn by the Patent Office from consideration. By this Amendment, claim 11 has been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, new claims 17-19 have been added, and claim 1 has been amended. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-8 and 12-19 are presented for examination, with claims 1, 17 and 18 being in independent form.

Claims 1 and 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as purportedly anticipated by Japanese Patent Application No. JP 10-329445 (Mori). Claims 4, 5, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Mori. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Mori in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,981,746 to Matsuo et al. Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Mori in view of Japanese Patent Application No. JP 06135172 (Kobayashi). The Office Action indicated that claims 11 and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended by incorporating the features described expressly in claim 11 which is canceled by this Amendment. Amended claim 1 and claims depending therefrom are believed to be allowable over the cited art for at least the reasons that claim 11 would have been allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

New independent claims 17 and 18 include the features described expressly in claims 11 (now canceled) and 12, and therefore are submitted to be allowable over the cited art for at least

the reasons that claims 11 and 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required in connection with this response and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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